

Message Text

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ORIGIN SNM-02

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 USIA-15 OMB-01 SS-15 DEAE-00 CIAE-00

INR-07 IO-11 JUSE-00 NSAE-00 TRSE-00 NSC-05 OES-05

AF-06 ARA-10 EA-09 EUR-12 NEA-10 PRS-01 PA-02 HEW-06

/118 R

DRAFTED BY S/NM:DHERNST:SCT

APPROVED BY S/NM:DHERNST

OMB:EJOHNSON

S/S :APSHANKLE

DESIRED DISTRIBUTION

USIA FOR TOWERY

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R 140600Z FEB 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS

UNCLAS STATE 036908

INFORM CONSULS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR

SUBJECT: POLICY CONCERNING MARIHUANA

1. THE POLICY OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH CONCERNING MARIHUANA HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF A NUMBER OF RECENT CONFUSING PRESS ACCOUNTS, SOME OF WHICH HAVE UNDOUBTEDLY BEEN REFLECTED IN THE FOREIGN PRESS.

2. MR. RICHARD PARSONS, THE ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF THE DOMESTIC COUNCIL AND CHAIRMAN OF THE WHITE HOUSE DRUG ABUSE TASK FORCE, TODAY ADDRESSED A MEMORANDUM TO THE TASK FORCE ON THIS SUBJECT. THE MEMORANDUM STATES: "LAST SUNDAY
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(FEBRUARY 8) THE PRESIDENT HAD OCCASION TO ADDRESS THIS

ISSUE. HERewith, FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE, IS
THE PRESIDENT'S VIEW:

'QUESTION: MR. PRESIDENT, I WAS WONDERING HOW YOU FEEL
ABOUT THE ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF MARIHUANA?

'THE PRESIDENT: THERE IS A GREAT CONTROVERSY IN THE
SCIENTIFIC WORLD AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THE USE TO A
SUBSTANTIAL DEGREE OF MARIHUANA IS GOOD OR BAD FOR A
PERSON'S HEALTH. UNTIL THERE IS A HIGHER DEGREE OF
UNANIMITY AMONG THE SCIENTIFIC WORLD THAT MARIHUANA
IS NOT HARMFUL TO THE INDIVIDUAL, I DO NOT THINK

WE SHOULD DECRIMINALIZE MARIHUANA.

'I THINK THAT WE SHOULD DO AS THE WHITE HOUSE DOMESTIC
COUNCIL REVIEW RECOMMENDED; THAT WE SHOULD CONCENTRATE
OUR EFFORT AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL ON HARD DRUGS, THE
TRAFFICKER AND THE OTHERS (E.G. FINANCIERS).

'BUT, I RE-EMPHASIZE, I DO NOT BELIEVE IN THE DECRIMIN-
ALIZATION OF MARIHUANA UNDER THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTAN-
STANCES.'

"THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT IS SIGNIFICANT BOTH BECAUSE HE
CLEARLY STATES HIS OPPOSITION TO DECRIMINALIZATION OF
MARIHUANA GIVEN THE CURRENT CONTROVERSY ABOUT ITS EFFECTS
AND BECAUSE HE EXPRESSLY ENDORSES THE RECOMMENDATION OF
THE DOMESTIC COUNCIL DRUG ABUSE TASK FORCE THAT PRIORITY
IN FEDERAL ANTINARCOTICS EFFORTS BE DIRECTED AT THOSE
DRUGS WHICH HAVE THE HIGHEST COSTS TO SOCIETY AND TO THE
USER. (SEE, WHITE PAPER ON DRUG ABUSE, PP. 29-34.) OF
COURSE, GIVING 'PRIORITY' TO HARD DRUGS DOES NOT MEAN
TOTALLY ABANDONING OUR EFFORTS AIMED AT OTHER, LESS HARM-
FUL DRUGS. TO QUOTE THE WHITE PAPER (PP. 33-4):

'THIS RANKING DOES NOT MEAN THAT ALL EFFORTS SHOULD BE
DEVOTED TO THE HIGH PRIORITY DRUGS, AND NONE TO OTHERS.
DRUG USE IS MUCH TOO COMPLICATED AND OUR KNOWLEDGE TOO
IMPRECISE FOR THAT. SOME ATTENTION MUST CONTINUE TO
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BE GIVEN TO ALL DRUGS BOTH TO KEEP THEM FROM EXPLODING
INTO MAJOR PROBLEMS AND BECAUSE THERE ARE INDIVIDUALS
SUFFERING SEVERE MEDICAL PROBLEMS FROM EVEN A LOW
PRIORITY DRUG, SUCH AS MARIHUANA.

'HOWEVER, WHEN RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS FORCE A CHOICE,
THE CHOICE SHOULD BE MADE IN FAVOR OF THE HIGHER
PRIORITY DRUGS.'"

3. IT IS HOPED THAT THE ABOVE WILL BE HELPFUL TO YOU IN
RESPONDING TO ANY COMMENTS OR INQUERIES. INGERSOLL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, MARIJUANA, DRUG CONTROL
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE036908
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: DHERNST:SCT
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760058-0089
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760247/aaaabozc.tel
Line Count: 118
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SNM
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: housmasa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 JUL 2004 by oatisao>; APPROVED <06 OCT 2004 by housmasa>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POLICY CONCERNING MARIHUANA
TAGS: SNAR, US, (PARSONS, RICHARD)
To: ALL POSTS
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006